



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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**Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee**

February 23, 2009

**SB 943 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A UNIFORM START DATE FOR CONNECTICUT
SCHOOLS**

**HB 6497 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR CHILDREN IN
FOSTER CARE**

**SB 942 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DATE CERTAIN FOR STUDENT NOTIFICATION
OF ATTENDANCE AT AN INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOL**

**SB 941 AN ACT CONCERNING ADULT EDUCATION COURSEWORK AND HIGH
SCHOOL GRADUATION CREDITS**

SB 946 AN ACT CONCERNING INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOLS

**HB 6488 AN ACT CONCERNING INSTALLATION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS ON
SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

HB 6492 AN ACT AUTHORIZING BOARD OF EDUCATION CONTINGENCY FUNDS

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) opposes SB 943 An Act Establishing a Uniform Start Date for Connecticut Schools. In setting a calendar for the academic year, boards of education take many issues into consideration, including school construction, local events, religious holidays, professional development, and snow days. Some schools within a district may even open on different days for different grades, to provide for student orientation. Labor Day is on Sept 7th this year, and 49 districts out of 161 choose to start school after Labor Day.

CABE supports the goal of HB 6497, An Act Concerning Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care – to provide educational continuity for students in foster care. It is critical that responsibility for transportation be with the Department of Children and Families, as provided in the bill.

CABE supports SB 942, An Act Establishing a Date Certain for Student Notification of Attendance at an Interdistrict Magnet School. We urge you to amend the bill to make the date April 1, so that those districts going to referendum in May can have a better chance at proposing an accurate budget to voters.

CABE supports SB 941, An Act Concerning Adult Education Coursework and High School Graduation Credits. This bill would provide the opportunity for a high school student to earn a limited amount of credits towards high school graduation through an adult education program, with the approval of the high school principal. The bill provides an additional option for students completing their high school requirements.

While school board members recognize the need for foreign language acquisition by our students, we urge you to refrain from adopting specific high school graduation requirements, such as that contained in SB 945, An Act Concerning World Language Requirements, until the resources are available to enact comprehensive secondary school reform. This bill proposes an additional unfunded mandate in an area where we are already experiencing a teacher shortage.

SB 946, An Act Concerning Interdistrict Magnet Schools, addresses some issues related to the funding of magnet schools, but may be counter productive to the continued success of these schools. Statutory limitations on the annual budgets for magnet schools, and elimination of the parent pay option for part-time interdistrict magnet schools, could jeopardize the successful operation of these programs.

CABE supports HB 6488, An Act Concerning Installation of Photovoltaic Panels on School Buildings, which would allow the cost of installation of solar panels as an eligible cost during roof replacement projects. This would support energy saving efforts by school districts.

CABE supports HB 6492, An Act Authorizing Board of Education Contingency Funds, which would allow boards of education to exercise prudent fiscal planning by carrying over funds from one fiscal year to the next. We would encourage the amendment of this bill to provide that the amount of the contingency fund be a percentage of the school district budget, rather than the flat sum of \$150, 000.